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HENRY W. HILLIARD AND WILLIAM L. YANCEY

To-day the typical Alabamian is conversant with his State's history because he is a man of intense State pride. He is proud of the fact that his State's civilization was framed upon models furnished by Virginia and South Carolina statesmanship. As a rule, the accessions to her population from Kentucky and Georgia readily harmonized with the dominant elements. It was North Carolina and Tennessee who injected a more democratic spirit into her aristocratic institutions. Ask the Alabamian who of orators occupy the foremost rank in the State's history, and he will instantly answer, Henry W. Hilliard and William L. Yancey. Ask him what political canvass stands out in boldest relief of all the memorable struggles upon the hustings of the State, and he will unhesitatingly reply, That of Hilliard and Yancey in 1851.

Many famous political canvasses were incited by the slavery and secession issues in the ante bellum South. Among them none surpassed the Hilliard-Yancey canvass in widespread popular interest and exciting incident. Though limited to southeastern Alabama, its various stages were watched throughout the country with an absorbing concern; as ten years later when it became the capital of the Confederacy, Montgomery was a focus of political opinion and activity. This was due to the fact that the city was the home of the two great leaders of the Whig and Democratic parties, Hilliard and Yancey. They represented ably and untiringly the extremes of Southern thought and policy concerning the clear-cut and well-defined issues of the day. While those issues are still matters of current knowledge, the two leading exponents of them, outside Alabama, are well known only to the student of history.

Before detailing the particulars of the canvass, let me endeavor to give, within reasonable space, as true and graphic a picture as I may be able of the two representative party leaders and rivals. Their characters present wide divergencies and striking similarities. Their careers likewise exhibited great contrasts and unique parallelisms. Both were college-trained men.

Hilliard, a native of North Carolina, was a graduate of the College of South Carolina under the presidency of Thomas Cooper, an ultra advocate of free trade and nullification. Yancey, a native of Georgia, was reared and prepared for college by a New England stepfather, Rev. N. S. S. Beaman, one of the most eminent and successful of the many New England school masters who influenced mightily the higher intellectual life of the old South. From his tutelage Yancey was transferred to Williams College in Massachusetts, which he left an undergraduate because of straitened finances.

Some future historian will show that the New Englanders in the South and their immediate descendants, and the native Southerners educated under New England skies and influences were, or came to be, the doughtiest champions of States Rights and Secession, and in the Civil War fought for them with a zeal and a courage surpassed by no participants on either side in that cruel war.

Both Hilliard and Yancey were trained for the law under the best types of Southern lawyers. Hilliard's preceptors were William C. Preston, at Columbia, South Carolina, and Augustin S. Clayton, at Athens, Georgia; Yancey's instructors were Nathan S. Sayre, at Sparta, Georgia, and Benjamin F. Perry, at Greenville, South Carolina. Early in their careers both became editors of newspapers. Hilliard in 1830 edited for one year the Columbus (Ga.) *Enquirer*; became later incognito editor of the Tuscaloosa (Ala.) *Monitor*; and from 1839 to 1841 directed the editorial policy of the Montgomery (Ala.) *Journal*. Yancey, before he reached his majority, edited the Greenville (S. C.) *Mountaineer*. In 1836 he settled at Cahawba, Alabama, where he combined the practice of law with cotton planting and edited the Cahawba *Democrat*. Later moving to Coosa county, he edited the Wetumpka *Argus*. The combination of the two occupations, because of the intimate association of law and politics at the time, was a very common arrangement, by no means so exceptional as at present, when journalism has become almost as distinctive and complicated a profession as the law. It is noteworthy that at the outset of their professional lives, coeval with the nullification issue in

South Carolina, both were staunch defenders of the Union, and opposed vehemently the extreme position of the Calhoun school of constructionists.

Their activity in political life began with election to the State Legislature. Hilliard in 1838 represented Montgomery county in the house of representatives. In a noted speech on resolutions to instruct the senators of Alabama in Congress to support the sub-treasury system, he laid the foundation of his future career in politics. Tuscaloosa was then the capital. Here he had lived three years while professor of English literature in the State university. Already an orator of established reputation and popular in all ranks of society, the galleries and lobbies thronged with the city's elite and visiting strangers to hear him meet in combat William Smith, of Madison County, an aged statesman and well-trying politician who had won his spurs years before as senator from South Carolina in the United States Senate. Hilliard won a triumphant and brilliant success, despite the fact that the majority in the House was safely democratic. Yancey became a member of the Alabama house of representatives in 1841, and two years later was elected to the senate. He made reputation as a forceful debater and eloquent speaker. As state legislator his name is associated with a successful effort to eliminate the enumeration of negroes from the basis of representation in the Legislature, and the enactment of a law protecting the estates of married women.

Both men became members of Congress about the same time. In 1844 Yancey was elected to fill the vacancy created by the elevation of Dixon H. Lewis to the United States Senate. Hilliard, after serving two years as *chargé d'affaires* in Belgium, was elected to Congress in 1845. Yancey served nearly two terms, resigning in his second term because, as he declared, he was too poor to be a congressman. Hilliard served three terms, and voluntarily relinquished a position which he might have retained indefinitely. Yancey's congressional career is chiefly remembered by the duel he fought with Thomas L. Clingman, of North Carolina, wherein they exchanged shots without suffering personal harm, to the perfect satisfaction of personal honor. With his first speech Hilliard took high rank. This was on the

Oregon "fifty-four forty or fight" question. It was his wise and tactful suggestion that brought the house to a satisfactory solution and possibly forestalled a precipitate war with Great Britain. The House had debated whether or not to claim the whole of Oregon by legislative act and to give notice at once to Great Britain to vacate and surrender her claims. Hilliard proposed in his speech that a resolution be passed empowering President Polk to give notice whenever he deemed it best, a proposal which was accepted as the solution of a delicate situation. The honor belonging to Hilliard was all the greater because arrayed against him were Stephen A. Douglass, chairman of the committee on Territories, and C. J. Ingersoll, chairman of the committee on Foreign Relations, two of the most influential members of the lower house. John Quincy Adams, then serving Massachusetts in the House of Representatives, after listening attentively to the argument, approached Hilliard enthusiastically and said to him: "I come to congratulate you, Sir; I think you have settled the question."

Yancey was the champion bolter or independent of his times. He was perfectly willing to bear whatever odium and ostracism attached to his course, whenever he revolted because he was not permitted to write or dictate the platforms of his party. In 1848, unable to secure the adoption of a declaration in the national platform strongly protecting Southern interests as he viewed the situation, he withdrew from the Baltimore convention that nominated Lewis Cass for President. He was able to carry with him but one of the Alabama delegation. His act was interpreted as one of moral courage, though deemed highly prejudicial to party welfare. In 1852 he repudiated the platforms of the two great national parties and allied himself with the small factional element led by Troup and Quitman. In 1856, finding the Cincinnati convention that nominated Buchanan to be substantially in accord with his views, he again became active in party ranks and was placed at the head of the Buchanan electoral ticket. In the Alabama state convention in 1860, he drew up the platform which the Charleston convention should adopt, and prepared the instructions for the Alabama delegation to withdraw in the event of failure to win — which was done,

Hilliard, equally conscientious but conservative, believed in fighting out differences in the party organization, just as he believed in the South securing her right in the Union rather than by making the attempt through secession from the Union. A staunch defender of slavery and of moderate Southern interpretations of the Constitution, he viewed the disintegration of the Whig party with deep dismay and bitter regrets. From its political chart he had never deviated. When in 1856, the American party made its forlorn campaign, with the battered fragments of the Whig party leagued with discordant and heterogeneous elements, he worked valiantly for the election of Fillmore and Donelson. In 1860, a man without a party, as a spectator he attended the Charleston convention. With the organization of the Bell and Everett campaign, he ardently championed its platform and the ticket. When Alabama seceded he went with his state, became one of the Confederate commissioners to Tennessee to induce her to join her fortunes with the Southern Confederacy, and went to the front with three thousand men, known as "Hilliard's Legion."

As intimated, Yancey was unyielding and persistent in any cause he espoused. He had no patience with suggestions of compromises. So unrelenting in spirit and denunciatory in language was he, that he was distrusted as a leader of his own party. Men esteemed him visionary, impractical, injudicious. This impression was so far-reaching as to discredit his leadership. Great and forceful man that he was, he had not that true greatness which concedes to others the possibility of holding correct views on debatable questions wherein they differed with him. With him there was no tolerance, no middle ground.

Hilliard was exactly the opposite in spirit. He contended for his rights and views with a heroic purpose and unquenchable ardor, yet he always knew when he was beaten and accepted as an alternative the best compromises he could secure. His manners were suggestive of unfailing courtesy. His speech was couched in elegant phraseology. He yielded to others honesty of conviction and sincerity of motive. He was never so solicitous about the prevalence of his own opinions as he was about the effect the policy advocated by him would have upon the im-

mediate welfare and future destiny of the country. His patriotism was national rather than sectional. In supporting the compromise measures of 1850 he brought down upon himself torrents of wrath and abuse. Hilliard was highly endowed with the prescience of statesmanship. He knew that slavery was doomed, that the South was buffeting the waves of advancing progress and civilization, and that it remained for her to get the best terms possible under constitutional guarantees. Yancey declared that the South, having no longer any security for her institutions and property rights, had but the one recourse, to withdraw from the Union—peaceably if possible, forcibly if necessary.

With his domineering spirit and sensitive nature, Yancey very naturally became involved in the personal difficulties so characteristic of the period and his section. Just after reaching manhood he killed in a street fight Dr. Robinson Earle, at Greenville, South Carolina. Tried for murder, his sentence was a fine of Fifteen Hundred Dollars and twelve months' imprisonment. The governor of South Carolina remitted One Thousand of the fine and waived the imprisonment provision. Allusion has been made to the duel with Clingman. A curious illustration of his irascibility, frankness, and resentment is shown in an incident that occurred during the Civil War while in the Confederate Senate. John J. Seibels had edited the *Montgomery Advertiser*, the democratic organ that supported Yancey and his extreme views with unwavering tenacity and fidelity. A brave Confederate officer, he was urged for promotion to a brigadier generalship. Seibels' friends entrusted the matter to Yancey. Taking it up with President Davis, Yancey said to him: "I am not on speaking terms with Colonel Seibels, and do not expect to be; but I urge his promotion." Davis refused peremptorily, and supposedly because of a political difference several years previous between himself and Seibels. Davis' course and treatment caused a breach with Yancey which was never healed.

On one occasion Yancey called upon Hilliard for a personal explanation of some remarks interpreted as derogatory to his character. In Hilliard's third canvass for Congress he

was pushed hard by his competitor, James L. Pugh, who in later days represented Alabama for many years in the United States Senate. Pugh assumed the role of assailant, and attacked Hilliard's record aggressively and relentlessly. Yancey was Pugh's warmest supporter on the stump, having been called from South Carolina to take up his cause. It was a stubborn, hard-fought race, doubtful to the end. Hilliard's success, in the face of such determined, spirited opposition, created great enthusiasm and rejoicing among the Whigs. After Pugh's defeat, Hilliard's friends prepared a grand banquet in his honor at the Exchange Hotel in Montgomery. In his speech he likened the contest on the part of his opponents to a game of cards, saying "The best trump of my adversaries was reserved for the last, and lo! it turned up a knave." Informants told Yancey the remark referred to him as mention was made of one "brought all the way from South Carolina." Yancey took umbrage and made inquiry of Hilliard whether the allusion was to him, and requested the language used. Hilliard's reply, August 10, 1849, was:

DEAR SIR: I hasten to reply to your note, which has just been handed to me by Colonel Elmore [John A.], and which, I regret to see, discloses some feeling in regard to a playful remark of mine. Our personal relations have been uniformly kind, and I have too sincere respect for those relations to employ any remark in regard to you which could be construed to your injury. If you had heard my speech, I am sure you would have laughed at it in perfect good temper.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

HENRY W. HILLIARD.

Once before, while in Congress, Yancey engaged Hilliard in spirited colloquy. It ended in Hilliard's discomfiture, though there was no outburst or expression of personal feeling. In debate, Hilliard was defending Webster against the imputations cast by the Ingersoll resolution to investigate the use of the secret-service money when Webster was Secretary of State. In the discussion, the bounty given Webster by the business men of Massachusetts, professedly to enable him to remain in public service, was a point of attack for democrats. Mr. Hilliard de-

nounced severely what he termed "the tracking down of public men" and "the turning over of the pages of vile party defamation." In reply Yancey could not resist sending a poisoned shaft to a vulnerable spot. He asked Hilliard if in the campaign of 1840 he had not resorted to the practice of "Ogleism," meaning the reproduction of belittling charges made by Congressman Ogle against Van Buren in 1840. He asked if Hilliard had not told the "gold spoon story on Van Buren and repeated the count of the utensils in the White House kitchen, and ransacked the bed chambers for an inventory of articles found there?" Hilliard acknowledged the corn, and Yancey said that he had never indulged in "tracking down" men in public life in that way.

In young mahood Hilliard became a Methodist local preacher. In the course of a long life he never felt ashamed of his religious professions, and steadfastly adhered to his purpose to fill the pulpit at intervals. He carefully refrained, therefore, from any step that might reflect upon the gospel of peace, good will, and charitable judgment which he preached with recognized power. His self-control was often sorely tried. On two occasions in Congress his avocation was made the target for insidious thrusts. He resented them with dignified demeanor, but in denunciatory language unmistakable in meaning. Thaddeus Stevens, who made himself cordially distasteful and personally obnoxious to his political adversaries, took occasion to allude to Hilliard's ministry in a debate on the slavery question. He told Hilliard that he should announce to his distinguished friend, President Zachary Taylor, his impending doom by selecting the text, "Accursed is the man-stealer," and should entreat him to escape the divine anger by abandoning his slaves. In answer, Hilliard said that he would leave the condemnation of one guilty of such offensive language and gross impropriety to the sense of justice and decency cherished by men of honor and intelligence.

Edward Stanley, congressman from North Carolina, offered him a like indignity, charging him with a desecration of the scriptures "by quotations from them urging the citizens of the United States to shed each other's blood" and "with a design

to break up the Union." Instantly Hilliard rose in his seat and indignantly pronounced the insult gratuitous, the statement false, and the charge atrocious. He commended the member's discretion in singling out for assault one whose professions forbade further notice than indignant protest and verbal condemnation. The next day he made a speech of some length explanatory of his sentiments and course touching disunion and Southern Rights. Therein he adverted to his unpremeditated and harsh reply as stronger than would have been made in a cooler moment and under less provocation.

I come now to the events which put the powers and talents of these two men to the supreme test. They were the only two men in Alabama who could be anything like evenly matched when there was to be called into play the greatest exhibitions of forensic ability and eloquent statement by champions of the two great national parties. They had never met before the people in any extended debate of stirring issues. There was a general eagerness to see them in the arena grappling with the throbbing themes of the hour, and yet there was hesitation. There were misgivings lest the banner so long and proudly borne by the party champion and idol might trail in the dust of defeat.

On December 3, 1850, in the *National Intelligencer*, Hilliard published a letter to his constituents, declining to serve longer in Congress. He expressed gratitude for the generous support that had been given to him, and for the repeated manifestations of the approval of his political course. He thought he could retire without detriment to the cause of Southern Rights and to the interests of the country. He declared his belief that, through the compromise measures, internal discord had been allayed and fraternal concord would again reign supreme. Withdrawing from public life and resuming his professional career in the vigor of manhood, he hoped, in the happiness and quietude of private life among a people whose affection he cherished, to promote his long neglected private interests.

Despite the announced motives, the democrats attacked persistently and unsparingly his record in Congress, confining the brunt of the attack to the compromise measures. They even imputed to him as a political crime the fact that he supped on

one occasion with Daniel Webster, notwithstanding the latter had made his celebrated 7th of March speech. They maintained that he was afraid to enter again the race for fear of defeat, and that they were eager to have one more opportunity of sending him to his political grave.

Hilliard's declination was final, despite protests and entreaties on the part of his friends, and reflections and imputations on the part of his enemies. Accordingly, the ascendant Whig party of the Montgomery district cast about for a successor who would continue to achieve Whig victories. The choice fell upon James Abercrombie. For many years Abercrombie had been an influential representative in the upper and lower houses of the State Legislature, and had spent, liberally and legitimately, of his wealth and time for party success. While a member of the house of representatives he had been won over to the Whig ranks in the fight against the sub-treasury scheme so ably led by Hilliard. The democrats nominated as his opponent John Cochran, the son of a Cocke County (Tennessee) farmer and graduate of Greenville College. He was a lawyer of high standing in Barbour County and had done yeoman service for his party.

In the meantime Congress had adjourned and Hilliard had returned to Montgomery. Abercrombie had made a canvass of the district in the spring of 1851, and returned to Montgomery thoroughly disheartened about his chances of election in August following. His fright was shared by many veterans of the Whig faith, who at the time happened to be in the city attending the Supreme Court. The attacks on Hilliard were bearing fruit in creating distrust and accomplishing the disintegration of the party. At a conference of the leaders the situation was thoroughly discussed. It was decided that only under the matchless spell of Hilliard's oratory and influence the district could be held loyal to the Whig cause. Within thirty-six hours the character of campaign was agreed upon. Posters were printed and circulated that the old victor of many a hard-fought field would speak at various strategic points in the district.

The Whig organ of the state was the *Alabama Journal* published at Montgomery and edited by John Codman Bates, a New

Englander and graduate of Middlebury College in Vermont. As an exponent of Whig principles and a writer of stirring editorials advocating Whig policies, he deserves to rank with fellow New England contemporaries, George D. Prentice of the *Louisville Journal*, C. C. Langdon of the *Mobile Commercial Advertiser*, George W. Kendall of the *New Orleans Picayune*, and a splendid array of others similarly engaged in various cities of the South. Bates in editorials and Hilliard in a card assigned as a reason for Hilliard's decision in taking the stump that the latter had been so maligned and misrepresented by his political enemies, that duty and justice demanded that he should defend his course before his political friends and supporters in heart to heart talks; that they honored him in the past, and might construe silence as a lack of courage, a want of appreciation, and a betrayal of confidence. Not being a candidate for re-election, he said that he would invite no one of opposing views to meet him and would countenance no interference as demanded by either justice or courtesy.

The reasons assigned were adroit; but the alert and aroused democrats did not fail to see the object and significance of the new tactics. They declared the reasons set forth to be a miserable subterfuge and were determined to goad Hilliard into accepting their chosen champion, Yancey, as an opponent at each of the appointments. Their organ, the *Advertiser*, edited by a fiery South Carolinian and graduate of the College of South Carolina, John J. Seibels, poured out constant volleys of irritating editorial shot and shell. Hilliard's appointments were declared to be "arrogance and presumption," "a monstrous outrage." The *Journal* replied with biting sarcasm: "Hilliard has beat his enemies into a miserable cocked hat, routed the whole concern, 'horse, foot, and dragoons,' — therefore, these vials of wrath and ebullitions of the old venom." Then hurling defiance, the *Journal* said: "*Carpe diem!* Go ahead! Take your time, Miss Lucy! Go it while you are juveniles! Hilliard's appointments are private, and conventionalisms of society and good taste forbid invading them; but a free country!" The *Advertiser* retorted that the plan was simply carrying out a bargain made two years before, when Hilliard, for Abercrom-

bie's aid, offered to stand aside now and help the latter win. The *Journal* denounced the statement as "utterly untrue; mere moonshine. There was no such agreement." At the same time Hilliard came out in another card saying: "I shall adhere to my first resolution. No taunts, no criticisms, no comments will deter me. I shall pay no attention to any one selected to meet me. I have had my personal triumphs over the combined forces of my enemies — talent, influence, money, the press, the orators, great and small. I prefer to confer quietly with my old constituents, without interruption and in the absence of excitement engendered by angry debate."

When the *Advertiser* pronounced the card and position of Hilliard a piece of arrogance and presumption, the *Journal's* answer was in its most sarcastic vein: "What right has he (Mr. H.) to speak in defense of this contemptible union, or even in self-defense? The very announcement causes some to shake in their shoes. They have reason for it, and the utter and desperate fear of the man, as evinced by their constant and bitter attacks, is warranted by their experience — they have felt the weight of his weapon. He has met them too often at Philippi; and the remembrance of those encounters is accompanied with recollections other than grateful and cheering in divers quarters. In the flash language of another, they have never met him in the last fourteen years that 'he did not maul the dog-water out of them in a style too numerous to mention.' Hence these fears — 'the burnt cat dreads the fire.' "

The democrats were not to be thwarted in their purpose, by etiquette, ridicule, or threats. They were determined that Yancey should appear with Hilliard at his first and every other appointment, though to do so it was necessary to cancel an engagement to deliver the annual address before literary societies of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Hilliard was announced to make his opening speech at Union Springs, a village forty-five miles distant from Montgomery, the home of wealthy planters and of a refined people. Accompanied by a large following of enthusiastic adherents, Yancey appeared on the ground at the hour named on the handbills and claimed the right of presenting jointly his views on current issues. Confronted by

Yancey on the spot, there was no alternative left to Hilliard except to meet him face to face. He agreed, therefore, that a committee of his friends should arrange with a Yancey committee the details of debate. It was decided that Yancey should open and Hilliard close, with an allotment of one and a half hour to each. This was not altogether satisfactory to Yancey. At first he insisted that the order should be reversed, on the ground that it was Hilliard's work to build up and his to tear down. Inasmuch as it was Hilliard's plan of campaign that he was breaking his way into forcibly, he yielded the point after some stickling, and launching out poured forth his destructive broadsides against his opponent upon a sea of eager, up-turned faces. He charged Hilliard with inconsistency on the slavery question and pressed the point that a man holding such views could not be entrusted with the interest of the South. He denounced Fillmore and Webster as opposed to the extension of slavery, and Hale and Giddings as unqualified, uncompromising abolitionists. He scored the compromise measures unmercifully. They brought no relief to the South, and were discountenanced by the leading statesmen of the North. Eloquent tribute was paid to the chivalry of the South and to the valor of Southern soldiery in the Mexican war. The Southerner having fought and won the battles of that war, two-thirds of the acquired territory should be at his disposition. He favored immediate secession, but would abide by his party's action. After speaking somewhat over an hour, he asked how much time remained to him. The answer came twenty-five minutes. Then his partisans shouted "Go on! Go on!" He replied that he wanted only five minutes more. Amid shouts to "go on," he soon desisted with the remark: "Well, I have said enough for Hilliard to chew on for ten hours, and I'll quit." In his book, "Politics and Pen Pictures," Hilliard says of him: "He spoke for more than an hour with animation, but not with the vigor I had expected from him."

Enthusiastically received by his friends, Hilliard began his reply with an expression of regret that his original plan had been thwarted, and that a joint discussion had been forced upon him against his judgment. He discussed the ordinance of 1787

forbidding slavery in the northwest territory, thus showing the institution from the government's beginnings had been under congressional control, though he believed in its extension as in any other property right. In an aggravated form the question did not rise until the Oregon territorial government was in process of formation. To the bill organizing the territory the Wilmot proviso, forbidding slavery, was attached, and Mr. Yancey, while a member of Congress, voted for the bill with this prohibitory clause. He discussed the compromise measures, and attempted to show by the provisions that the South stood then in advance of any position it had held on slavery for the ten years preceding. He did not question the sincerity of Yancey in advocating secession, but declared it unwise and unstatesmanlike. He maintained his loyalty to the South, while professing friendship for the Union. After hearing the debate, a Chuneynuggee farmer declared that Yancey had been completely "over-crapped."

The exposure of Yancey's vote on the Oregon bill disconcerted and irritated him greatly. It forced him to an explanation. On the floor of Congress he had opposed vigorously the clause prohibiting slavery; but defeated, he voted for the territorial organization on the ground that some form of government was imperatively needed in that far off region. On the third day a serious breach came about, and for a time the debate was interrupted. The occasion of the rupture shows how an insignificant matter — the thoughtless use of a word — may produce unfortunate misunderstandings. At the same time it shows the eagerness and readiness of an opponent to catch any slender thread whereon to hang a point and clinch an argument. Hilliard was not wholly blameless in the affair.

Yancey, explaining how he voted for the Oregon bill with the Wilmot proviso, said that the vote was cast upon a bill to *admit* Oregon. In his reply Hilliard alluded to the fact with emphasis that Yancey had said that it was a vote to *admit* Oregon. The word *admit* was used inadvertently instead of *organize*, one having reference to statehood, the other to territorial entity. Doubtless forgetting that he had used the word *admit*, Yancey rose promptly and pronounced Hilliard's statement false and

said that Hilliard knew it was so when he made it. His manner was very offensive and highly insulting. A Hilliard organ, the Eufaula *Southern Shield*, edited by Benjamin Gardner, describes Yancey, on the occasion, as using "rough and uncouth language," "anything but courteous," "out of temper," when Hilliard "handled him without gloves," "and exposed his unfairness and disingenuousness, holding up his vote on the Oregon bill, with the Wilmot proviso in it."

With the close of debate Hilliard decided to break off all future discussion with Yancey without some explanations, and assurances that such an occurrence would not be repeated. The next day's speaking had been announced to take place at Eufaula, next to Montgomery the most important town in the district. Great crowds had gathered in eager anticipation of a great battle of giants, inasmuch as the canvass was already far-famed and widely advertised. The respective retinues of noted politicians and enthusiastic adherents from adjoining counties, who were taking in every appointment to speed on the good work as each interpreted it, were on hand. The excitement was intense. There was dismay created by the threatened interruption. Notes passed between the representatives of each gentleman in a vain effort to bring the speakers together on the same platform; but Hilliard was inflexible in his purpose to permit no joint discussion without an apology. With a correspondence ending to no purpose, Yancey's partisans claimed vociferously that Hilliard had backed out, while Hilliard's friends maintained that Yancey had shown the white feather. For several days each gentleman spoke separately, while filling their appointments. This was entirely too tame an affair after so much fun and such displays of fireworks. Eventually the two orators were brought together, differences were satisfactorily adjusted, and the joint discussion continued to the end. Hilliard in his book, "Politics and Pen Pictures," after speaking of the renewal of cordial relations says: "Before the debate opened Mr. Yancey and I were seated in pleasant conversation, when he said to me: 'Mr. Hilliard, shall we have a friendly debate to-day?' I replied: 'Mr. Yancey, I must mention your vote on the Oregon question; I cannot overlook it to-day.'"

Infinite satisfaction was expressed by the adherents of each over the results at each appointment, and the honors of victory were adjudged and proclaimed according to party bias. I should be disposed to question the accuracy of the judgment of the Alabama *Journal* editor touching the effect of the canvass upon each of the distinguished combatants, were it not for the overwhelming victory achieved by the Whigs, or Union men, over the Democrats, or Southern Rights, men at the polls. Abercrombie won by twelve hundred majority, a majority far exceeding any given Hilliard in any of his contests. The canvass closed at Montgomery with a barbecue and a five hour's debate between Hilliard and Yancey. Speaking of Yancey the *Journal* said: "No one could have defended a bad cause better than did Mr. Yancey. Every point of supposed advantage, of which the subject was susceptible, was ably made by him. He seemed hampered, however — the banner of secession was not over him — his heart did not seem in it — and he found himself in a position which he recently deprecated — that of tolerating expediency and milder remedies. His tone is changed from that ultraism which he so boldly urged before the commencement of the canvass, and as Mr. Hilliard said, he has made him a very fair Union man as times go. In that respect Mr. Hilliard claims him as the captive of his bow and spear.

"Mr. Hilliard was in fine spirits, evidently feeling like Rob Roy, that 'his foot was his native heath, and that his name was McGregor.' He returns exulting, triumphant, and full of confidence from the combat. Not a feather has been struck from his lofty crest, and without mark of stroke of lance upon helm or shield. The banner which was entrusted to his hands he brings back, as ever before, brilliant with the lustre of victory. His inspiriting eloquence awoke the confidence and enthusiasm of his friends and the friends of the cause, who responded to it with rapturous cheers."

Judge William R. Smith, in his "Reminiscences of a Long Life," has a very readable sketch of Hilliard. Therein at some length in a brilliant vein he describes an incident of the debate. This was Yancey's effective use of the phrase, 'god of battles,' and Hilliard's equally effective demolition of it. I am in-

clined to think this a myth, the product of a fervid imagination, for in reading repeatedly the narrative of the debate in successive issues of Hilliard's mouthpiece, the *Journal*, I find no such incident mentioned. The nearest approach to anything of the kind is Hilliard's playful allusion, at one appointment, to the act of Yancey's friends in carrying from place to place a cannon, which was fired to disturb Hilliard. He said at Midway: "Mr. Yancey and the gun are alike. The gun is a *big* gun, and so is Mr. Yancey; but I am not afraid of either, as they both fire *blank cartridges*." I regret my disillusionment, or rather that I must question the authenticity of the Judge's story, for it is a passage which I have read and re-read with an ever-increasing zest.

As a curious relic of political doggerel and buncombe, I resurrect a campaign song sung at one of the barbecues of the canvass to the tune, "The Old Granite State," and composed by J. S. Vann:

We have come from hill and valley, we have come from hill and valley,
We have come from hill and valley here to sing a Union song;
We are all for our country, we are all for our country,
We are all for our country, and we'll show it at the polls.

We are all true-hearted Union men, we are all true-hearted men,
We are all true-hearted Union men, Abercrombie at the head,
And we go for Arthur Bowden, and also for William Kirkland,
Come all true-hearted Southerners, and let us save our country.

Now success to Abercrombie, shout the sons of old Columbia,
He is going for the Union, and we'll speed him on his way,
For we hope this mighty nation may retain her present station,
And strife and divisions may be all done away.

You may tell us of disunion and your Southern Rights communion
We are children of the Union; we are not to be deceived
By a false pretension to a Southern Rights convention,
For the whole intention is this Union to dissolve.

We are all Washingtonians, we are all Madisonians,
We are all Jeffersonians, and are friends to the South;
But we hope to see this Union, North and South, in such communion,
Going hand in hand together, and our institutions prize.

Our country's now in motion, as a ship upon the ocean,
But we have a secret notion that she shall not be lost;
Though the wind and tide are swelling, our speakers they are telling
Us wi h trust on our side we can stand a mighty host.

May some sweet spirit guide us through the storm that doth betide us;
Though our enemies deride us, we still united stand
On the rock of our Constitution, and we fear no sad pollution,
For we think this thing Disunion must perish from the land.

In this canvass Hilliard reached the climax of his oratorical power and success. The Whig party, to which he had given such faithful allegiance, was then being swallowed up in the vortex of the slavery agitation. The waning of its fortunes and the growing unpopularity of the Union sentiment in the South placed him and his views on the losing side in the conflict of great, momentous issues. With the crystallization of Southern sentiment towards his point of view, Yancey grew steadily thereafter with conscious strength to more gigantic proportions until he reached the zenith of his oratorical power and success in the Charleston convention of 1860.

The estimates placed upon the two orators by surviving contemporaries have a remarkable unanimity. The epithets applied to them indicate their distinctive traits of character and peculiarities of style. Yancey was termed "the Demosthenes of the South," "the Patrick Henry of the Second Revolution," while his opponents called him "the Achilles of Secession." Hilliard was a Chesterfield in manners and a Chevalier Bayard in spirit. The physical make-up of each fulfilled the popular conception of the orator's personal appearance. Hilliard was courtly in bearing, graceful in movement, tall of stature, finely proportioned of body, with a clear, soft eye of blue which lighted up a benignant countenance. Yancey was of the average height, compact of body without superfluous flesh, of strong features, and had flashing black eyes which bespoke a passionate temperament. He carried himself like a lion.

Hilliard devoted his early professional years to an exhaustive study of Demosthenes and Cicero, and patterned his orations after those of the renowned orators of antiquity. He familiarized himself with ancient and modern history, studied discriminatingly and quoted felicitously the poets, and used the material garnered with consummate tact and telling effect. Furthermore, he used figures drawn from nature with great success. The grandeur and ruggedness of the mountains and the vastness

and fury of the sea were often invoked to give sublimity and emphasis to his flowing periods. Yancey towered in constructive argument and in impassioned outbursts of eloquence. He was so unique and individualistic that he may be said to have had no models. His orations showed an intimate knowledge of history and a wide acquaintance with classical mythology. Not being the accomplished scholar that Hilliard was, he was not addicted so much to literary anecdote and poetic quotation as his distinguished rival.

It may be well to let Hilliard tell further of the abilities of his famous rival whom he survived nearly thirty years. In passages selected here and there from his book, "Politics and Pen Pictures," Hilliard says: "Of great intellect, high culture, commanding presence, great magnetism, and powerful in debate, Mr. Yancey was in every way an extraordinary man. Opening his speeches in a manner that was courteous and pleasing, exhibiting nothing of the latent passions of his nature, as he advanced in his argument he not only presented great intellectual force in the statement of his propositions, but he exhibited a vehemence unsurpassed in our country since the time of Patrick Henry. It was because he believed that the safety of the South depended upon a vigorous assertion of its rights at all hazards, involving even the subversion of the Union, that when he addressed the people, the ardor of his patriotism flamed up with volcanic energy and splendor. In reviewing my intercourse with public men, I recall no one who made a greater impression upon me than the Hon. William L. Yancey."

However imperfect and unsatisfactory in the performance, my task is now done. With impartial judgment and warm sympathy I have attempted to bring before the mind's eye of the reader some idea of the tremendous influence wielded by those two distinguished representatives of the old South in the special forum of their distinctive activities and in the special exhibition of their distinctive endowments.

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